

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CLINIC & HOUSING CLINIC  
YALE LAW SCHOOL

TO: Hon. Geoff Luxenberg, Co-Chair; Hon. Marilyn Moore, Co-Chair;  
Members of the Housing Committee

FROM: Caroline Markowitz, Yale Law School '23

DATE: February 27, 2023

RE: Support for H.B. 6633

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Dear Representative Luxenberg, Senator Moore, and members of the Housing Committee:

My name is Caroline Markowitz, and I am a third-year student in the Housing Clinic at Yale Law School, which has long represented Open Communities Alliance. I was also born and raised in Greenwich. I am testifying in support of House Bill 6633, to create a Fair Share system.

I am in support of Fair Share because I believe it will help Connecticut break out of the vicious cycle of housing scarcity and economic stagnation that we are caught in. It is true that most of Connecticut is declining in population. But I strongly believe that this is *not* because our state is not a desirable place to live. It is precisely because there is not enough housing, particularly affordable rental housing, in the state to support economic growth. Only by compelling all Connecticut towns to plan for a reasonable amount of growth, through the Fair Share planning process, will Connecticut be able to attract the new businesses and jobs that will cause the concerning population trends to reverse.

Arguments about lack of demand for new housing ignore the skyrocketing cost of housing in the state, and, even more fundamentally, they get the problem exactly wrong: economic stagnation does not create a lack of housing development, but housing scarcity, largely caused by restrictive zoning, causes economic stagnation. For example, since the time I left Greenwich to go to college in New York, my neighboring city—Stamford—has built over 9,000 new units of housing.<sup>1</sup> As a result, many large businesses have moved to Stamford, bringing attractive jobs. Many of my peers who were also born and raised in Connecticut are therefore choosing to remain in or move back to the state, working and living in Stamford, instead of finding housing and opportunity outside the state.

The story of Stamford's growth shows that more housing supply can increase population. This should not be limited just to Stamford, though. By increasing housing production—and particularly affordable housing production—beyond places like Stamford, we can help spread these positive effects throughout the state. If both central cities and suburbs build new housing, employers will be even more likely to relocate here. Moreover, it will allow even more young professionals to move to, or back to, Connecticut—specifically those who would like to live in towns like Greenwich where they were raised, but where restrictive zoning practices have led to astronomical home prices that prevent them from living close to their own families and

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<sup>1</sup> *Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, City of Stamford, Conn.* xi (June 30, 2021), <https://www.stamfordct.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/16738/637889783611300000>.

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communities. Fair Share will make it possible again for young people to settle down and start their families in the same places where their own parents did. As a result it will increase the tax base, the vibrancy of Connecticut towns, and the overall economic condition of the State.

Fair Share is good for the future of Connecticut. I therefore urge the Committee to pass House Bill 6633. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Caroline Markowitz". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large, stylized 'C' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'z'.

Caroline Markowitz